



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

INTERPRETATION OF *ILIAD* xxiii. 670

As soon as Achilles had announced the prizes for the match in boxing, Epeius, the skilled and mighty boxer, strode forward and with arrogant words demanded the prize. His words are easily translated, except one verse, the meaning of which seems beyond the grasp of editors and commentators: ἦ οὐχ ἄλκις ὄττι μάχης ἐπιδεύομαι (670). Dr. Leaf evidently understood this verse thus: "Is not my failure in battle sufficient proof of my skill in boxing?" for he adds: "Why a man should excuse bad fighting on the ground that he is a good boxer it is hard to see." Ameis-Hentze, in the English translation by Professor Clapp, has: "Is it not enough that I am inferior in prowess at arms? Let no one dispute my single point of superiority." It is indeed strange that a warrior should put forth his inferiority in battle as sufficient proof for his superiority in boxing—so strange that Dr. Leaf takes refuge in the idea of an interpolation, but then who would have added to a sensible poem a senseless interpolation? Then when a foolish bard had added it, why would other bards accept a verse which was only nonsense? All theories of interpolation of absurd verses break down at the critical point, in their ability to find bards and audiences which would accept them. It is easy enough to assume foolish bards, but foolish audiences are also needed before these absurd interpolations could pass into literature.

This verse in question is thus original and being original must make good sense, a thing certainly lacking in all the translations named above.

The clue to the verse is found in the *Odyssey* xv. 370. In this passage the swineherd tells how in former times he had received raiment, attentions, and comfort, but now all things are changed and he lacks all of them, νῦν δ' ἡδὴ τούτων ἐπιδεύομαι. In this passage in the *Odyssey* the verb must mean "I am without" and has no notion of inferiority or superiority.

If we interpret the verse in xxxiii. 670 in a like manner, then there will be no absurdity and there will be only good sense. "Is it not enough that I lack a battle?" That is, that no one presents himself as an antagonist. He thus claimed the battle by default. Even after he had finished his speech there was a long and deep silence, and Euryalus, even then, was the only one who dared to meet him.

The words with which verse 670 ends and which fill the following verse do not refer to Epeius, the speaker, but to the others who did not dare accept the challenge to box. The translation of the two verses then is: "Is it not sufficient that I am unable to get a fight? It is no wonder, for no man has ever been skilled in all things." He means that it is no disgrace for the rest, if they dare not box with him, for boxing is his especial art, and they are not debased by their allowing him the battle by default.

The interpretation given is natural and is demanded alike by the setting of the passage and the ordinary meaning of the words.

JOHN A. SCOTT

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY